Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and lists, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A fast scanning stage for a scanning probe microscope, said scanning probe microscope including a probe, said fast scanning stage comprising, at least one fixed support, and a sample stage having at least one axis of translation, said sample stage being affixed to said at least one fixed support by means for causing displacement of said sample stage relative to said probe through the application of a bias voltage of 100 volts or less.

2. (Currently amended) A fast scanning stage for a scanning probe microscope, said scanning probe microscope including a probe, said fast scanning stage comprising at least one fixed support and a sample stage having at least one axis of translation, said sample stage being affixed to said at least one fixed support by means for causing displacement of said sample stage relative to said probe, and in which said means for causing displacement of said sample comprise at least one actuator element supporting said stage and a sine waveform generator for actuating said at least one actuator element through the application of a bias voltage of 100 volts or less.

3. (Previously presented) A fast scanning stage as claimed in claim 2 in which said means for causing displacement of said sample stage comprise four actuator elements supporting said sample stage.

4. (Currently amended) A fast scanning stage for a scanning probe microscope, said scanning probe microscope including a probe, said fast scanning stage comprising at least one fixed support and a sample stage having at least one axis of translation, said sample stage being affixed to said at least one fixed support by at least one actuator element, a sine waveform generator for actuating said at least one actuator element, in which said sample stage is displaced by said at

least one actuator element being driven at the frequency of resonant vibration through the application of a bias voltage of 100 volts or less corresponding to translation of said sample stage with respect to said probe.

5. (Previously presented) A fast scanning stage as claimed in claim 3 in which said sample stage has a square or rectangular configuration and each corner of said sample stage is supported by one of said actuator elements.

6. (Original) A fast scanning stage as claimed in claim 5 in which said actuator elements form a parallelogram scanning element.

7. (Original) A fast scanning stage as claimed in claim 6 in which said actuator elements are connected electrically in parallel.

8. (Original) A fast scanning stage as claimed in claim 2 in which said at least one actuator element comprises a stack bending element.

9. (Original) A fast-axis scanning stage as claimed in claim 2 in which said at least one actuator element comprises a PZT bimorph.

10. (Original) A fast-axis scanning stage as claimed in claim 3 in which said at least one actuator element comprises a PZT bimorph.

11. (Previously presented) A fast-axis scanning stage as claimed in claim 1 in which said sample stage is comprised of a material selected from the group consisting of ceramics, heat resistant polymers, and anodized aluminum.

12. (Currently amended) A scanning probe microscope including a probe and a fast scanning stage, said fast scanning stage comprising at least one fixed support, and a sample stage having at least one axis of translation, said sample stage being affixed to said at least one fixed support by at least one actuator element supporting said sample stage to cause displacement through the application of a bias voltage of 100 volts or less of said sample stage relative to said probe.

13. (Currently amended) A method of operating a fast scanning stage for a scanning probe microscope, said scanning probe microscope including a probe, comprising, providing a sample stage having a sample thereon and causing displacement through the application of a bias voltage of 100 volts or less of said sample on said sample stage relative to said probe by actuating at least one actuator element to drive said sample stage at the resonant frequency of said sample stage using a sine waveform generator.

14. Canceled.

15. (Previously presented) A method as claimed in claim 13 in which the resonant frequency of said sample stage is about $1/100^{th}$ that of the resonant frequency of said probe.